



Representative **Joyce**  
13th District **Mulliken**



## 13th District Report

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**Special assignments:**

Eastern Washington  
Caucus  
WA State Conservative  
Caucus  
Coalition of Washington  
Counties  
Wetlands Subcommittee  
Reading Literacy  
Subcommittee



Dear Friends:

As the state Legislature begins its 1998 session, I'd like to let you know what issues we'll be covering, and what my priorities are.

We'll work on a **transportation** funding package that will provide money for our state's transportation needs, but **won't raise the gas tax**. I believe we can find money to pay for improvements to our roads, bridges and railways without making you pay more at the gas pump. Getting our agriculture products to market efficiently is my top priority.

Speaking of taxes, as vice chairman of the Finance Committee I will be deeply involved in efforts to continue **reducing your property tax burden**, and to **simplify the entire tax system**, which has grown far too complicated. I'd like to see a significant reduction in the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) in our effort to return more of your hard-earned dollars back to you.

Reforming the **Growth Management Act** is also high on my agenda. The GMA, in its present form, is an unfair law that punishes people in rural areas. Many people in the 13th District are very frustrated by GMA, and I hope to help change it in the '98 session.

On the education front, I'm working to find ways to improve **reading literacy**. It's a sad fact that children in our state are not learning the reading skills they need. This problem will only get worse unless we make sure students learn to read at the earliest possible age.

Finally, I will continue — along with my fellow House Republicans — to work for a **smaller and more accountable government, lower taxes, and less bureaucratic interference** in people's lives.

It is an honor to serve you in the House of Representatives. I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions, concerns or comments. Your input helps me to be a better representative!

Sincerely, .

# Representative Joyce Mulliken



## Responsible spending saves you money!

In the last two years, the Legislature not only met the state spending limits established by Initiative 601, we came out ahead. The result: *From 1995-1997, we saved you, the taxpayers, \$168 million dollars.*

Because of our commitment to responsible spending and smaller government, *we have helped create a state surplus of more than \$850 million*, much of which will go into a "rainy day" fund. I believe this fund is a responsible way to protect us in case of future economic downturns.

**Republicans will continue to fight for less government spending. We know that every dollar the government spends is a dollar taken out of a hard-working taxpayer's wallet, and we are working to make sure your money is spent wisely.**



*Rep. Mulliken speaks on the House floor*



## Property taxes: The debate continues

In November, voters approved R-47, which will:

- Reduce the state portion of your property taxes by 4.7 percent
- Limit the rate by which cities, counties and other taxing districts can raise property taxes in the future
- Prevent large increases in property value assessments

These changes are good, *but they are only a start* — in the coming months I will push for **additional reductions in the state's portion of the property tax**, possibly a 5 percent annual reduction, or 10 percent for each biennium, with a total phase out of the state's portion. I believe this would get us moving in the right direction. Even though it may not look like much on your property tax form, it would eventually eliminate one-third of the total.

In the long run, I'd like to see a **complete overhaul of the tax system** and a **reform of the way property is evaluated**. This won't happen overnight, but I think it's a goal we should strive for.

## Drunk driving

This year the Legislature will look at new ways to keep drunk drivers off our roads. I've spoken with law enforcement officers throughout the 13th District, and they've told me the following measures would be most helpful in combating drunk driving:

1. For the first DUI (Driving Under the Influence) offense, keep it on a person's record for five years. For second and subsequent offenses, keep them on the record permanently.
2. Make drunk drivers serve longer jail sentences.

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## Growth Management Act

GMA is an urgent issue for many property owners in Eastern Washington. Since it became law in 1990, GMA has caused countless problems with people's property rights and spurred many landowners to demand a change in the law.

When GMA was passed, most people thought it would apply only to major urban areas that were in danger of developing massive suburban sprawl. But actual implementation of the law has veered widely from its original intent. People in rural areas have seen their land come under the control of unelected agency bureaucrats and growth management hearings boards that have final say over how our land is to be used.

At a GMA hearing I presided over in Moses Lake this fall, more than 100 people came to express their views. Most of them were very frustrated, and asked me and my colleagues to do something to reform the law.

### What can be done?

I'm working on several measures to lessen the impact of GMA on rural communities. These proposals favor local control over government intervention:

- ✓ **Reforming GMA so the hearings boards cannot invalidate growth management plans agreed on by local communities.**
- ✓ **Allowing job-creating industries to locate outside of "urban growth boundaries."**

- ✓ **Letting counties and cities plan outside of the state GMA, while still designating resource lands and protecting critical areas.**

GMA will be a big issue this session, and I'll be watching it closely. As the only Eastern Washington legislator on the Government Reform and Land Use Committee, I'll also make sure the voices of rural landowners are heard.

## Reading literacy

In a recent statewide test of fourth-graders, *only 48 percent of students met the reading standards*. This shocking statistic is a real wake-up call — we must do everything we can to make sure children improve their reading skills *now*.

Gov. Gary Locke has proposed a tutoring program that will allow 22,000 volunteers to work with 72,000 first- and second-grade children who need help with reading. This is a good idea, but I hope the governor will join the Legislature in passing education reforms that will make such Band-Aid tutoring efforts unnecessary.

**We must reform the education system so every child, from kindergarten on, can master the basic reading skills.**

Tutoring is fine, but our goal should be to teach students right the first time around.



### Parents' rights in education

I'll continue to fight for parents' rights in the '98 session. Some of the measures I'm considering are:

- Ensuring privacy. Schools cannot use a student's Social Security Number as ID, nor can they disclose the SSN to anyone outside the school.
- Requiring parental permission for questionnaires and surveys of a student's or family's personal beliefs.
- Requiring parental permission before classes on euthanasia, suicide, homosexuality, sex education, sexually transmitted diseases, etc., can be taught.

### Other issues...

- Hanford Reach: I'll keep working with Rep. Gary Chandler on shared federal, state and local control, and multi-use of the Reach.



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